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2026 TOWN ELECTIONS

For School Committee: Heather von Mering

January 1, 2026 . 9:00 AM — 3 min read

What experiences and perspectives would you contribute to the School Committee? I would bring four complementary perspectives to the School Committee:

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Parent: As a parent of five children in Winchester Public Schools, with experience across preschool, three elementary schools, middle school, high school, and out-of-district placement, I have seen firsthand what's working in our schools and where we have opportunities to do better.

Advocate: I have been a long-time advocate for literacy reform and special education, especially for students with dyslexia and language-based learning disabilities. By bringing parents together and working with school and state leaders, I've pushed for meaningful improvements in how Winchester identifies, supports, and teaches students with diverse learning needs. My advocacy has focused on strengthening foundational literacy instruction, improving Tier 2 supports, and ensuring students receive the services they need to succeed.

Professional: I serve as Vice President at Von Salmi & Associates, where I work in construction and asset planning across the Commonwealth, supporting property owners and builders in long-term capital planning, budgeting, and project oversight. That background informs my approach to facilities governance, fiscal responsibility, and stewardship of our school buildings.

Town Leader: For 16 years, I have also served Winchester on the "town hall side" of government—including the Historical Commission, Planning Board, Capital Planning Committee, and as Town Moderator and Town Meeting Member. Through this service, I have developed a strong understanding of municipal finance, public process, and how transparency and disciplined goal setting translate community commitments into measurable results.

What are two or three issues facing Winchester, related to the public schools, that you think are most important and what are your positions on them?

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STRENGTHENING LITERACY, MATH, AND TIERED SUPPORTS

The district has committed to a research-based foundational literacy program (K–5), a comprehensive math program (K–12), and strengthened Tier 2 instruction. These are significant initiatives that I fully support. But their success depends on careful implementation. The School Committee must ensure strong professional development, consistent use across all schools, and clear benchmarks to measure progress so these commitments translate into measurable, meaningful results for our students.

LONG-TERM FACILITIES PLANNING

We need community-driven, transparent, long-term planning for our school facilities, including Muraco and Parkhurst, while also addressing critical maintenance needs at McCall, Ambrose, and Lincoln. Every decision should be guided by the educational needs of our students and the broader community.

It is long overdue to rebuild Muraco, and I was encouraged when the Massachusetts School Building Authority invited Winchester to partner on this project. The process will take time, but I am committed to bringing my construction and asset planning experience to help ensure it is thoughtful, fiscally responsible, and supportive of students for generations to come.

SUSTAINABLE FUNDING AND FISCAL STABILITY

Winchester faces a structural budget deficit in Fiscal Year 2027. I support the operating override to provide a more stable financial foundation to restore important programs, address building needs, and invest in student learning. Without it, class sizes could increase, staffing reductions may be necessary, and extracurricular programs could face cuts.

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Thanks to the Select Board's creation of the State of the Town Committee, the School Committee and WPS administration have been working collaboratively to bring greater clarity and transparency to the district's finances and priorities. I support continuing this work to strengthen long-term financial stability and accountability.

What are your views on the proposed changes to the literacy curriculum? I strongly support the district's move to adopt an evidence-based foundational literacy program available to every student in grades K–5 and was part of the group of parents and community members who advocated for this change.

As a parent of children in Winchester Public Schools, with experience navigating support for dyslexia and language-based learning disabilities, I have seen how essential strong early literacy instruction is to long-term success. I support continued collaboration with the School Committee and the Elementary Literacy Team as curriculum options, including EL Education and Arts & Letters, are evaluated. The anticipated selection will be in Spring 2026 and full implementation for the 2026-2027 school year. Adequate funding and strong professional development will be critical to ensuring this investment delivers measurable results for students.

If only some new programs proposed in the FY27 School Committee budget can be funded, how would you decide which programs to fund at higher levels, current levels, reduced levels, or to cut? If only some new programs in the FY27 budget can be funded, I would focus first on those that directly impact classroom instruction and student outcomes. If difficult trade-offs are required, core academic instruction, particularly literacy and math, along with investment in Tier 2 supports, should be protected before new enhancements.

Why should voters elect you to the School Committee? I bring f perspective as a parent, a proven track record of advocacy, professional

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experience in construction and capital planning, and 16 years of leadership in town government. I understand how schools operate, how budgets are built, and how to turn community priorities into clear, measurable results. I will listen, collaborate thoughtfully, and bring disciplined goal-setting and consistent follow-through to the School Committee so every student is seen, heard, and given the opportunity to thrive.

How would you like voters to contact you?

info@vonmeringforwinchester.com · vonmeringforwinchester.com

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He won all eight precincts after a door-to-door campaign that emphasized direct voter contact over institutional backing.

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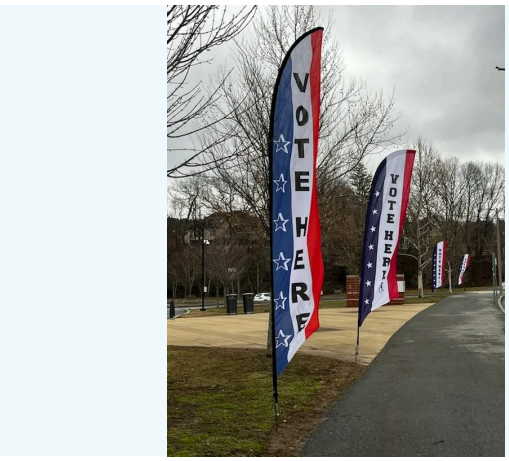

2026 TOWN ELECTIONS

13 YEARS OF DATA, ONE SATURDAY: Takeaways from Winchester's override vote and the races that surrounded it

Winchester News reviewed precinct-level election results from every annual town election since 2014 — 13 years of data covering turnout, ballot questions, Select Board races, School Committee contests and Planning Board results — ar
them against the March 21

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numbers. The 2026 results have not yet been certified by Town

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March 25, 2026

NEWS

With override rejected, Winchester shifts from campaigning to budget planning

After Winchester voters rejected an $11.5 million Proposition 2 1/2 override on Election Day, March 21, the governing question in town has shifted from persuasion to arithmetic. Select Board member Bill McGonigle, who served on the Yes for Winchester campaign, said the defeat has changed how he approaches

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NEWS

Voters fill Town Meeting seats across Winchester; four incumbents unseated

The biggest shakeup came in Precinct 7, where two officeholders lost in an 11-person contest, matching Precinct 4 for the busiest race.

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March 21, 2026

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NEWS

Winchester ZBA waives town regulations to move Washington/Swanton project along

Town officials have approved waivers of regulations for a residential/commercial development project at Washington and Swanton streets. The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) on March 19 approved the waivers for a 40B project at 278-292 Washington St. and 12 and 16-20 Swanton St. in a special meeting preceding a

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John Bellaire, 22, among youngest townwide winners in Winchester history

He won all eight precincts after a door-to-door campaign that emphasized direct voter contact over institutional backing.

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March 25, 2026

EVENTS

Network for Social Justice to celebrate 35th anniversary

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: The Network For Social

EVENTS

Winchester Community Music School presents Jazz

The following was submitted by the Winchester Community Music School: On

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Justice turns 35 this spring! There will be a celebration on Saturday, April 11, from 7-9:30 p.m., at the Sons of Italy, 117 Swanton St., Winchester. Connect with your local friends and neighbors as

March 25, 2026

Saturday, March 28, join the community at Winchester Community Music School, 407 Highland Ave., for a Jazz Jam Session, an afternoon of fun, spontaneous jazz playing, beginning at 3 p.m. Instrumentalists and vocalists of all skill levels are

March 25, 2026

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